



*Education in Britain and in
Russia: advantages and
disadvantages*



Oxford vs Cambridge



Moscow, 2017

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How do British and Russian educational systems compare?

The answer is rather complicated.

The Russian educational system and the British system seem to be remarkably different with their advantages and disadvantages. Let's have a closer look at them.

EDUCATION IN BRITAIN



Historical background

British governments attached little importance to education until the end of the nineteenth century. It was one of the last countries in Europe to organize education for everybody. (Britain was leading the world in industry and commerce, so, it was felt, education must somehow be taking care of itself.) Schools and other educational institutions (such as universities) existed in Britain long before the government began to take an interest. When it finally did so, it did not sweep the existing institutions away, nor did it always take them

over. In typically British fashion, it sometimes incorporated them into the overall system and sometimes left them alone. Most importantly, the government left alone the small group of schools which were used to educate the sons of the upper and upper-middle classes. At these 'public' schools, the emphasis was on 'character building' and the development of 'team spirit' rather than on academic achievement. This involves the use of distinctive customs attitudes, clothes, and items of vocabulary. They were all 'boarding schools' (that is, the pupils lived there), so they had a deep and lasting influence on their pupils. Their aim was to prepare young men to take profession, the civil service, the church, and politics.

The public school system.

Historically, stereotypical public schools:

- * are for boys only, from the age of 13 onwards, most of whom attended a private 'prep' (preparatory) school beforehand*
- * take free-paying pupils (and some scholarship pupils who have won a place in a competitive entrance exam and whose parents do not pay)*
- * are boarding schools (the boys live there during term-time)*
- * make some of the senior boys 'performs', which means that they have authority over other boys and have their own servants (called 'fags'), who are appointed from amongst the youngest boys*
- * place great emphasis on team sports*
- * enforce their rules with the use of physical punishment*
- * are not at all luxurious or comfortable*

However, this traditional image no longer fits the facts. These days, there is not a single public school in the country in which all of the above features apply, and a fairly large number of girls' public schools for the last hundred years, and by now most public schools are mixed. Many schools admit day pupils as well as boarders, and some are day schools only; prefects no longer have so much power or have been abolished; fagging has disappeared and so has physical punishment; there is less emphasis on team sport and more on academic achievement; life for the pupils is more physically comfortable than it used to be.

Among the most famous public schools are Eton, Harrow, Rugby, and Winchester



When the pupils from these schools finished their education, they formed the ruling elite, retaining the distinctive habits and vocabulary which they had learnt at school. They formed a closed group, to a great extent separate from the rest of society, entry into which was difficult for anybody who had had a different education. When, in the twentieth century, education and its possibilities for social advancement came within everybody's reach, new schools tended to copy the features of the public schools. After all, they were the only model of a successful school that the country had.

Modern times: the education debates

Before the election which brought the Labour party to power in 1997, its leader, Tony Blair, declared that his three main priorities were 'Education, Education, and Education'. This emphasis testified to a general feeling in Britain that there was something very wrong with its system of education. It was not a new feeling. Perhaps because of its rather slow start, the British have long felt a little inadequate about their public educational provision. Education is the area of public life about which British people and governments feel the most uncertain. No other area has been subject to so many changes in the last quarter of a century.

Debates about education in Britain centre around three matters. One of these is quality. For decades, there has been a widespread feeling that British schoolchildren do not get taught properly and do not learn enough, and that they are less literate and less numerate than their European counterparts. Whether or not this is or was ever true is a matter of opinion. But these days it is common for employers and universities to complain that their new recruits do not have the necessary basic knowledge or skills (the three Rs) and there is much talk about

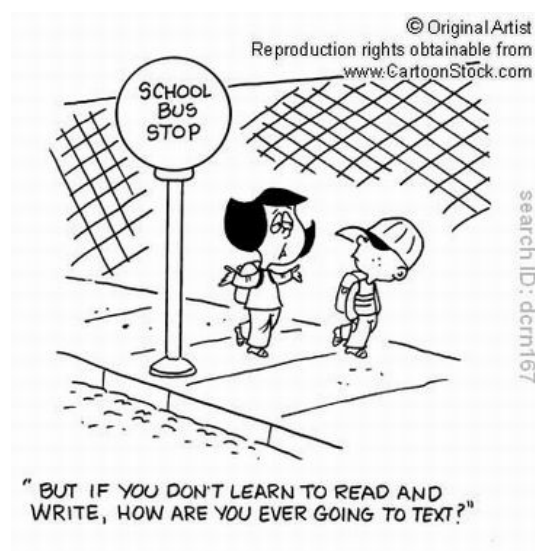
‘grade *inflation*’ with respect to exam results (i.e. the standard of a top ‘A’ grade is lower than it used to be).

The three Rs:

Basic literacy and numeracy is informally known in Britain as ‘the three Rs’. These are Reading, wRiting, and aRithmetic.

The politicians’ children

The issue of equal opportunity is often highlighted when the British media report a story about where a prominent government politician is sending his or her children to school. If, as is frequently the case, these children are found to be attending independent schools, there are loud cries of decision and protest. Interestingly, though, the protests rarely focus on the question of inequality. Indeed, they are usually careful to insist that x has the right to send his or her children wherever he or she likes. Instead, they focus on the quality issue and the case is held up as evidence that the government has no faith in its own education system.



Moreover, there is no doubt that Britain suffers from a chronic shortage of teachers. Although many young people embark on teacher-training courses, only about half of them remain in the profession for longer than three years, so that schools often have an unsettled atmosphere due to rapid turnover of staff and class sizes are large. (In 2003, British primary schools had more children per teacher than any country in Europe except Turkey.)

Why is it so hard for British schools to recruit, and keep, teachers? One reason is probably the tradition of English *anti-intellectualism*, which means both that it is often difficult to persuade pupils, especially boys to be interested in learning and also that teachers in Britain have, in comparison with other European countries, rather low status.

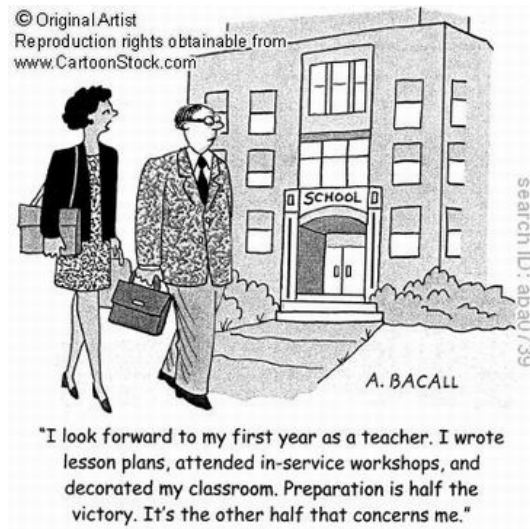
Going to Poland

Here is a newspaper article from 2007 which fuels British people's worries that educational standards in the country are poor. It was headlined 'A sad lesson'.

When Aleksander Kucharski arrived in Britain from Poland, he expected he would get a first-class education. He was accepted at a state school with one of the best academic records in the country. But after two years he is so disillusioned he has gone home to his old school, saying his British classmates were interested only in shopping and partying. 'The boys were childish,' said 16-year-old Aleksander, 'they didn't read papers and weren't interested in anything. And the girls only talked about shopping and what they were going to do on Friday night.' In Poland, you have to know the names of all countries, even the rivers. But in England hardly anyone could place Poland or Kenya on the map. The teachers didn't test knowledge, only effort.' Aleksander said that before he left Poland he was an average student. 'In Poland, I only ever got average marks in Maths, yet in the UK teachers said I was genius. After a year, I was top of the class in everything, and that includes English.' A spokesman for the St Thomas More High School in Newcastle said: 'We are disappointed that this pupil has decided to move away. Only two weeks ago the school was recognized by Ofsted as outstanding.' (This is the name of the government organization which inspects schools in Britain.)

Unfortunately, this status can sometimes become even worse precisely because of the general perception of poor educational standards. People want someone to blame for this, so they blame the teachers. This means teachers have to spend a lot of time being inspected and filling in forms to prove they are doing a proper job, making the job seem even less attractive. The government in this century has tried to alleviate the situation by advertising campaigns

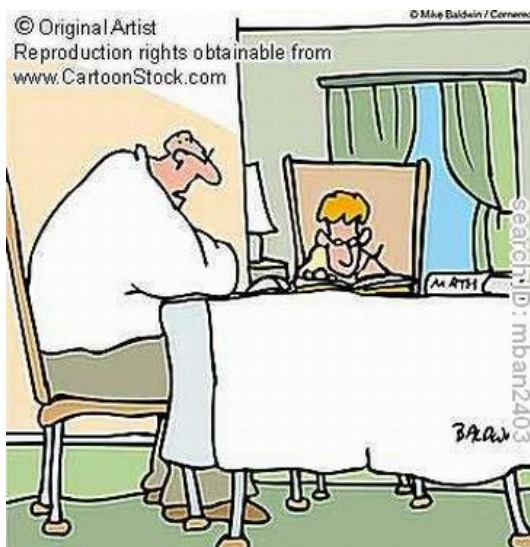
and other initiatives (such as national awards for excellence in teaching, known as the teaching ‘Oscars’).



The other response of British governments to the perceived deficiencies in quality of education has been to revise (sometimes, it seems, almost constantly) the national curriculum. This is the body of documents which specifies what children in state schools are supposed to learn at each stage of their school careers. But the interesting thing about education debates in Britain is that they are not only or even mainly about quality. Another aspect that is the subject of constant worry is social justice. Perhaps because of the *elitist* history of schooling in Britain and its social effects (see previous section), or perhaps just because of the importance they attach to fairness, the British are forever worrying about equal opportunities in education. British governments and educational *institutions* are obsessed with the knowledge that the majority of children who do well in education are from middle-class, comparatively wealthy background.

It was for this reason that during the 1970s, most areas of the country scrapped the system in which children were separated at the age of 11 into those who went either to a grammar school, where they were taught academic subjects to prepare them for university, the profession or managerial jobs, or to a secondary modern school, where the lessons have a more practical and technical bias. It was noticed that the children who were sent to grammar schools were almost all from middle-class families; those who went to secondary moderns tended to be seen as ‘failures’, so the system seemed to reinforce class distinctions. Instead, from this time, most eleven-year-olds have all gone on to the same local school. These schools are known as *comprehensive schools*.

However, the fact remains that most of the teenagers who get the best exam results, and who therefore progress to university, are those from relatively advantaged backgrounds and vice versa. In recent decades, a university education has become much more important than it used to be. At the same time, the gap between high earners and low earners has become wider than it used to be (see chapter 15). For both these reasons, equality of educational opportunity is more important than it used to be. Various schemes are being tried to correct this imbalance. Most notably, universities are now encouraged to accept students with relatively poor exam results if they come from a disadvantaged background. In some poorer areas, children are even offered, with government approval, cash incentives to pass their exams. ***However, it is almost impossible to provide real equality. Inevitably, the children of parents who care about education the most, especially if they have money, tend to get what they want for them. In some cases, this means moving house to make sure they can get their child into a school which gets good exam results (since children must attend a school in local area).***



"With a good education you can grow up to be anything I want you to be."

In other cases, if they feel that pupils from good schools are being discriminated against, it even means making sure your child gets into a school with bad exam results- and then hiring private tuition for them!

The only way in which such inequalities could be significantly reduced would be to ban all independent education and introduce lotteries for allocating places in secondary schools. In fact, this second possibility has already been tried (in modified form) in some areas. However, such measures conflict with another principle which is highly valued in Britain,

and is the third subject around which there is debate. This is freedom of choice. ***It is this principle, plus a belief that it would improve the quality of education in schools generally that has led to the publication of ‘league tables’ of school exam results.*** This has had the unfortunate effect of making it clear to ambitious parents which are the more desirable schools. (To some extent it has even led to the unofficial re-establishment of the two-tier system which was abandoned in the 1970s. Comprehensive schools are supposed to be all equal, but some are better than others).

But the belief in freedom of choice involves much more than which school a child goes to. It also implies a limit to what central government can impose generally. The British dislike of uniformity is one reason why Britain’s schools got a national curriculum so much later than other European countries. It was not until the end of the nineteenth century that it was fully operative. And since then, complaints that it was too rigid and dictatorial have resulted in modifications which have reduced the number of its compulsory elements.

Languages anyone?

For years now, educationalists, economists and official reports have been bemoaning the poor state of language-learning in British schools and the low level of foreign language ability in general among the British population. The British workforce, say these people, is in danger of being left behind in an increasingly internationalized job-market. And yet, when the national was slimmed down in the early years of this century, ‘modern foreign languages’ was one of the subjects that was left out. English children are the only pupils in Europe who are allowed to drop foreign languages completely from their studies after the age of 14. Fewer than ten percent learn a foreign language beyond the age of 16. Rather than trying to train a very small section of the population as language specialists. In Wales, the situation is different. The provision for a ‘foreign language’ is the same as in English but all pupils study both English and Welsh until the age of 16.

Moreover, it should be noted that the national curriculum has never specified exactly what must be taught on a day-to-day basis or prescribed particular teaching materials. A school can work towards the objectives of the national curriculum in any way it likes. Nor does central

government dictate the exact hours of the school day or the exact dates of holidays. It does not manage a school's finances either- it just decides how much money to give it. It does not set or supervise the marking of the exams which older teenagers do (see 'public exams' below). In general, as many details as possible are left up to the individual institution or the Local Education Authority (LEA- a branch of local government). (This was true even of the decision to scrap the pre-1970s system mentioned above. Indeed, a very few areas still have grammar schools.)

One of the reasons for this 'grass-roots' pattern is that the system has been influenced by the public-school tradition that a school is its own community. Most schools develop, to some degree at least, a sense of distinctiveness. Many, for example, have their own uniforms for pupils. Many have associations of former pupils, especially those outside the state system. It is considered desirable (even necessary) for every pupil, for daily assemblies and other occasional ceremonies. Universities, although partly financed by the government, have even more autonomy. (*School uniforms*)



The education system is divided into 3 stages: (*nursery*) *primary, secondary, higher.*

Nursery Schools:

Nursery begins at 3 years old. There are not enough state nursery schools (or kindergartens) in Britain and people have compaigned for a long time to get more opened. There are private nurseries but these are expensive and a lot of families cannot afford them. Children start at 9 a.m. and finish at 3 p.m., they have their lunch at school and usually

a rest in the afternoon. They play, paint, dance and sing and do the same things that all little children do.



Primary Schools:

At 5, by law, children start proper school. Infant school is from 5-7 years and Junior school from 7-11 years. The day begins at 9 a.m. and usually finishes at 3.30 p.m. The infant school has its own building and playground and is next to the junior school, with its own building and playground. There are usually about 35 children in a class and, in the infant school, as well as a teacher, there is a teacher's assistant. Also mothers (and occasionally fathers) often go into the Infant School to help with painting, reading and practical lessons. Children have the same teacher for one year and she teaches nearly all of the lessons in the class. Perhaps another teacher has them once a week for music or P.E.

Classrooms are bright and cheerful with children's work displayed on the walls and books, games and a computer in each classroom. The children usually sit in groups at tables and have drawers to keep their work in.

Children have to take tests at 7, 11 and 14. They learn English, maths, science and technology, history, geography and religious knowledge. A lot of learning is done through project or topic work, with an emphasis on children finding things out for themselves. They also learn about environment and, of course, do art, music and P.E.

Schools in England have names, not numbers. They often get named after the place where they are (*Green Hill School, Cedar Grove School*)



or after some famous or important people (*St Mary's School*)

Secondary Schools:

Children transfer from the primary school at 11. Secondary education takes from 5 to 7 years.

8% of British children go to Private Schools (called Public Schools). Another 4% don't go to school at all. By law parents have the right to educate their children at home, if they can show they can do it properly. The rest go to the **Comprehensive School**.

Grammar Schools are selective, they offer academically oriented general education. Entrance is based on a test of ability, usually at 11 (11+). Grammar schools are single sexed schools i.e. Children either go to a boys Grammar School or a Girls Grammar School. There are

grammar schools in Northern Ireland and some parts of England.



Independent Schools

7% of the children in England go to independent schools. Independent schools are known as private schools and public schools. Parents pay for their children to attend these schools.

Nursery/Kindergarten 2 to 4 years

Pre-preparatory 3 or 4 to 7 years

Preparatory 7 to 11 or 13 years

Public 11 or 13 to 18 years

Prep Schools

A preparatory school is a school to prepare pupils to go to a public school.

Public Schools

A public school is an independent secondary school. Public schools in England are not run by the government. The entrance exams used by most public schools are known as Common Entrance exams and are taken at the age of 11 (girls) or 13 (boys).

Public exams

At the end of their compulsory schooling, schoolchildren take exams. Although some of these involve knowledge and skills specified by the national curriculum, they are in principle separated from the school system. They are organized neither by schools nor by the government. That is why they are called 'public'. (There is no unified school-leaving certificate.) There is nothing to stop a 65 year-old doing a few of them for fun. In practice, of course, the vast majority of people who do these exams are school pupils, but formally it is individual people who enter for these exams, not pupils in a particular year of school.

The exams are set and marked by largely independent examining boards. There are several of

these. Each board publishes its own separate **syllabus** for each different subject. Some boards offer a vast range of subjects. Everywhere except Scotland (which has its own single board), each school or LEA decides which board's exams its pupils take. Some schools even enter their pupils for the exams of one board in some subjects and another board in other subjects. In practice, nearly all pupils do exams in English language, maths and a science subject. Many take exams in several additional subjects, sometimes as many as seven more.

The assessment of each examinee's performance in each subject is usually a combination of coursework assignments and formal, sit-down exams. Coursework has formed a large component of the total mark in many subjects in the last two decades. But the present trend is towards a return to more conventional exams.

Education beyond sixteen (and higher education)

At the age of 16, people are free to leave school if they want to. With Britain's modern enthusiasm for continuing education, far fewer 16-year-olds go straight out and look for a job than did previously.⁹ About a third of them still take this option, but even they take part in training schemes which involve on-the-job training, sometimes combined with part-time college courses. The rest remain in full-time education. About half of them leave their school, either because it does not have a sixth form or because it does not teach the desired subjects, and go to a sixth-form college, or College of Further Education.

The sixth form

The word form was the usual word to describe a class of pupils in public schools. It was taken over by some state schools simply use the word 'class'. Since the introduction of the national curriculum and the streamlining of different kinds of educational provision, it has become common to refer simply to 'years'. However, 'form' has been universally retained in the phrase 'sixth form', which refers to those pupils who are studying beyond the age of sixteen

An increasing number do vocational training courses for particular jobs and careers. Recent governments have been keen to increase availability of this type of course and its prestige (which used to be comparatively low). In the era of 'lifelong learning' even older adults over 25 in some kind of education or training is higher than the European average (exceeded only by the Nordic countries).

For those who stay in education and study conventional academic subjects, there is more specialization than there is in most other countries. Typically, a pupil spends a whole two years studying just three or four subjects, usually related ones, in preparation for taking A-level exams, though this is something else which might change in the near future.

Academic exams and qualifications

GCSE *General Certificate of Secondary Education. The exams taken by most 15 to 16 year olds in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland. Marks are given for each subject separately. The syllabuses and methods of examination of the various examining boards differ. However, there is a uniform system of marks, all being graded from A to G. Grades A, B, C are regarded as 'good' grades.*

SCE *Scottish Certificate of Education. The Scottish equivalent of GCSE. These exams are set by the Scottish Examinations Board. Grades are awarded in numbers, 1 being the best.*

A Levels *Advanced Levels. Higher-level academic exams set by the same examining boards that set GCSE exams. They are taken mostly by people around the age of 18 who wish to go on to higher education. At present, they are split into A1s and A2s. An A1 is worth half an A2 (the full A-level) and can stand as a qualification by itself.*

There is a certain amount of dissatisfaction with the A-level system. Many head teachers are now seriously thinking of throwing it out and adopting a foreign model – specifically the baccalaureate. In fact, there are already dozens of schools in Britain which prepare their students for the International Baccalaureate. Many people are now calling for a 'British Bacc'.

SCE 'Advanced Highers' *The Scottish equivalent of A-levels.*

Degree *A qualification from a university. (Other qualifications obtained after secondary education are usually called 'certificate' or 'diploma').*

Bachelor's Degree *The general name for a first degree, most commonly a BA (Bachelor of Arts) or BSc (Bachelor of Science). Students studying for a first degree are called undergraduates. When they have been awarded a degree, they are known as graduates. Most people get honours degrees, awarded in different classes. These are:*

Class I (known as 'a first');

Class II. I ('a 2.1' or 'an upper second');

Class II. II ('a 2.2' or 'an lower second');

Class III ('a third')

A student who is below one of these gets a pass degree (i.e. not an honours degree).

Master's Degree *The general name for a second (postgraduate) degree, most commonly MA or MSc. At Scottish universities, however, these titles are used for first degrees.*

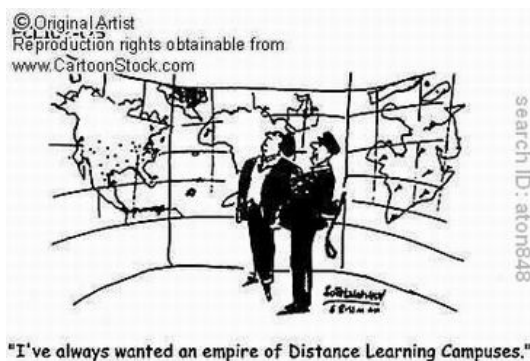
Doctorate *The highest academic qualification. This usually (but not everywhere) carries the title PhD (Doctor of Philosophy). The time taken to complete a doctorate varies, but it is generally expected to involve three years of more-or-less full-time study.*

The independence of Britain's educational institutions is most noticeable in universities. They make their own choices of who to accept for their courses. There is no right of entry to university for anybody. Universities normally select students on the basis of A-level results and a few conduct interviews. Students with better exam grades are more likely to be accepted. But in principle there is nothing to stop a university accepting a student who has no A-levels at all and conversely, a student with top grades in several A-levels is not guaranteed a place. The availability of higher education increased greatly in the last second half of the twentieth century (The growth of higher education), but finding a university place is still not easy. The numbers who can be accepted on each course are limited. (UCAS)

Because of this limitation, students at university get a relatively high degree of personal supervision. As a result, the vast majority of university students complete their studies- and in a very short time too. In England, Wales, and Northern Ireland, only modern languages and certain vocational studies take more than three years. (In Scotland, four years is the norm for most subjects.) Indeed, it is years repeatedly. Traditionally, another reason for the low drop-out rate is that students typically live 'in campus', (or, in Oxford and Cambridge 'in college') or in rooms nearby, and are thus surrounded by a university atmosphere. (The Open

University)

The Open University



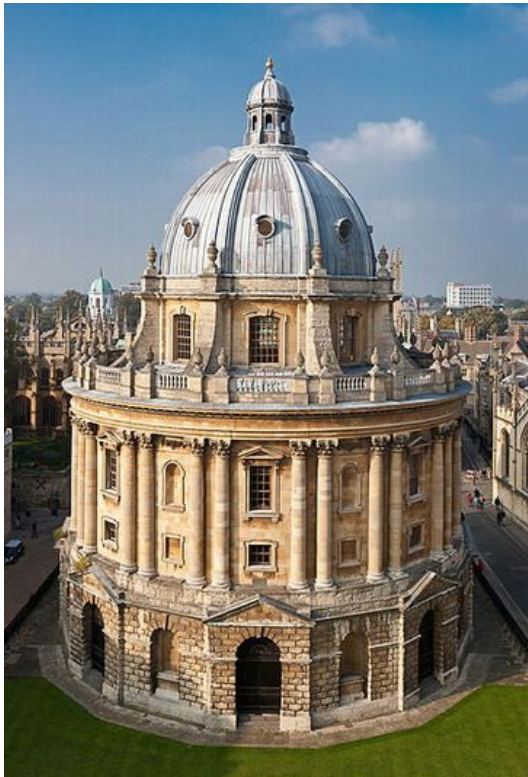
This is one development in education in which Britain can claim to have led the world. It was started in 1969. It allows people who do not have the opportunity to be students in the normal way by attending a university to study for a degree through (what has now become known as) distance education. When it started, its courses were taught through television, radio and specially written coursebooks. These days, of course, it uses the internet instead. Students work with tutors, to whom they send their written work and with whom they then discuss it. In the summer, they have to attend short residential courses of about a week.

However, the expansion of higher education during the 1990s caused this characteristic, and other traditional features, to become far less typical. Until this expansion, ‘full time’ really meant full time. Many students got jobs in the holidays, but were forbidden to take any kind of employment during term-time. But that was in the days when students got a grant to cover their term-time expenses. Because of the expansion, the grant has long since disappeared for all but the poorest. And in top of that there are now (unlike before) tuition fees to pay. Despite the existence of a student loan scheme, the result is that universities can no longer insist their student don’t take term-time jobs and about half of the country’s students do so. Indeed, so important is the income from these jobs that their availability in the area is an important consideration for many prospective students in choosing a university.

Types of university

There are no important official or legal distinctions between the various universities in the country. But it is possible to discern a few broad categories.

Oxbridge



This name denotes the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, both founded in the medieval period. They are federations of semi-independent colleges, each college having its own staff, known as ‘fellows’. Most colleges have its own dining hall, library, and chapel and contain enough accommodation for at least half of their students. The fellows teach the college students, either one-to-one or in very small groups (known as ‘tutorials’ in Oxford and ‘supervisions in Cambridge). Oxford has the lowest student/staff ratio in Britain. Lectures and laboratory work are organized at university level. As well as the college libraries, there are the two university libraries, both of which are legally entitled to a free copy of every book published in Britain. Before 1970, all Oxbridge colleges were single-sex (mostly for men). Nearly all now admit both sexes.

The old Scottish universities



By 1600, Scotland boasted four universities. They were Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen, and St. Andrews. The last of these resembles Oxbridge in many ways, while the other three are more like civic universities (see following column) in that most of the students live at home or find their own rooms in town. At all of them, the pattern of study is closer to the Continental tradition than to the English one - there is less specialization than at Oxbridge.

The early nineteenth-century English university

Durham University was founded in 1832. Its collegiate living arrangements are similar to Oxbridge, but academic matters are organized at university level. The university of London started in 1836 with just two colleges. Many more have joined since, scattered widely around the city, so that each college (most being non-residential) is almost a separate university. The central organization is responsible for little more than exams and the awarding of degrees.

The older civic ('redbrick') universities



During the nineteenth century, various institutes of higher education, usually with a technical bias, sprang up in the new industrial towns and cities such as Birmingham,

Manchester, and Leeds. Their buildings were of local material, often brick, in contrast to the stone of older universities (hence the name 'redbrick'). They catered only for local people. At first, they prepared students for London University degrees, but later they were given the right to award their own degrees, and so became universities themselves. In the mid twentieth-century, they started to accept students from all over the country.

The campus universities



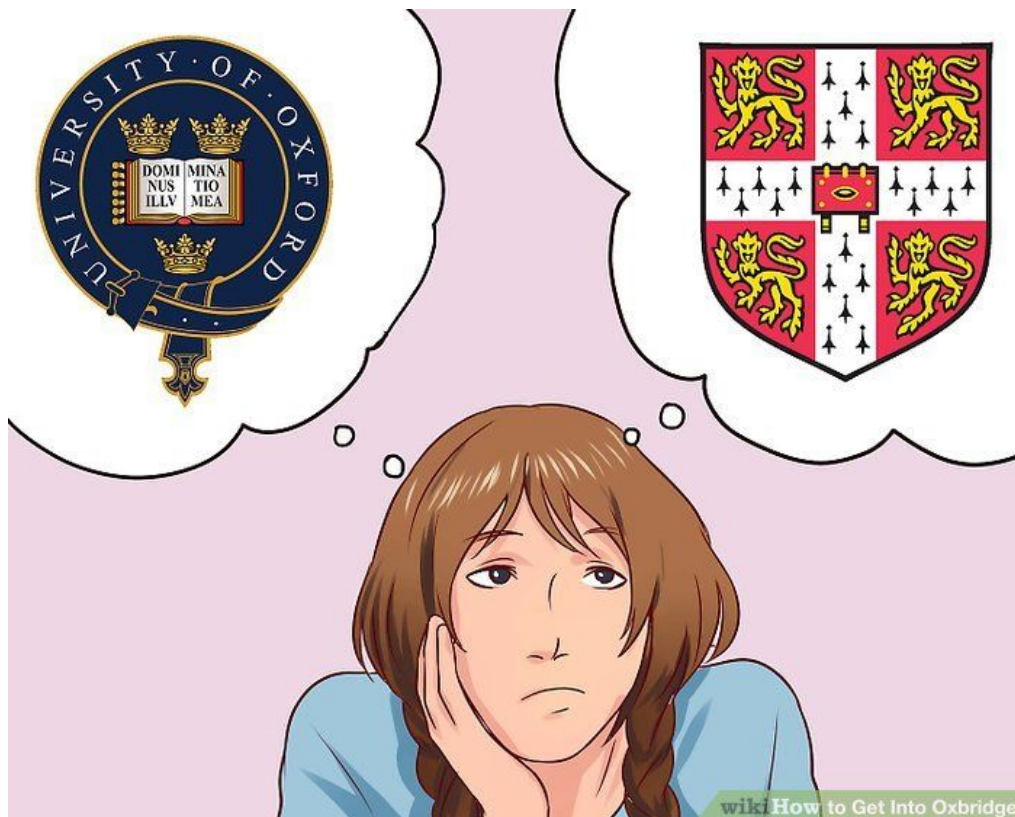
These are purpose-built institutions located in the countryside outside a nearby town. Examples are East Anglia, Lancaster, Sussex, and Warwick. They have accommodation for most of their students on site and from their beginning, mostly in the early 1960s, attracted students from all over the country. (Many were known as centres of student protest in the late 1960s and early 1970s.) They tend to place emphasis on relatively 'new' academic disciplines such as social science to make greater use than other universities of teaching in small groups, often known as 'seminars'.

The newer civic universities

These were originally technical colleges set up by local authorities in the first sixty years of this country. Their upgrading to university status took place in two waves. The first wave occurred in the mid 1960s, when ten of them (e.g. Aston Birmingham, Salford near Manchester, and Strathclyde in Glasgow) were promoted in this way. Then, in the early 1970s, another thirty became 'polytechnics', which meant that, as well as continuing with their former courses, they were allowed to teach degree courses (the degrees being awarded by a national body). In the early 1990s most of these (and also some other colleges) became universities. Their most notable feature is flexibility with regard to studying arrangements, including 'sandwich' courses (i.e. studies interrupted by periods of time outside education).

They are now all financed by central government.

There is evidence that students' studies are suffering as a result of the imperative to earn money. There is an irony here. The main thrust of government policy is to open up higher education to the poorer classes. But it is, of course, the students from poorer backgrounds will suffer the most in this way. It is for the same reason – money -- that an increasing number of students now live at home.



How to get into Oxbridge?

EDUCATION IN RUSSIA

Russia has a long-standing tradition in high-quality education for all citizens. It probably has

- Level 1 (Primary general education) - 4 years

According to current rules, pupils are accepted in the first Grade, if they were 6 years old by March 1 in the admission year.

Middle school takes 4 years — from the 1st to the 4th grade. It provides the minimum basic set of knowledge and skills, which are necessary for life and any work: reading, writing, elementary math, handicraft.

- level 2 (basic general education) - 5 years

Within five years, from 5th to 9th grade, students are enrolled in middle school. The main middle school course gives basic knowledge of the main fields of sciences. The basic school education is carried out according to the standard object-cabinet system: each course (class, lesson) leads the teacher — in the discipline expert (sometimes two or more), which has a private room, and a form during the school day goes from room to room. In addition, every form belongs to the tutor (class teacher) — one of the school teachers, which is officially responsible for the form, education in general.

At the end of p school students take the state (final) certification in the form of OGE: mathematics, Russian language and two more at the option (exam is considered as passed if a result of a mark is not lower than «satisfactory»). After the OGE each student receives a document “ Atestat” — a certificate of basic general education — confirming the fact of learning and having grades in all subjects studied. Upon completion of the middle school some pupils will stay and go to high school, some of them will go to study at secondary special educational institutions.

- level 3 (complete general education) - 2 years

The main purpose of high school is preparation for university entrance. In Russia these are the last two years of study: Grade 10 and Grade 11.

The course includes further study of the subjects previously studied in primary school, as well as a small number of new disciplines. Currently another attempt to switch the high school to specialized education (when a student chooses the direction of a more in-depth study of subjects, according to his own aptitudes). The set of possible training profiles provided by the school may vary.

Workload in the upper grades of up to seven lessons per day.

Upon completion the general education students pass the Unified State Examination (USE). Students must pass the math and Russian language. Passing the exam in other subjects is

voluntary, and the students selected are usually those items that are required for admission to the chosen university.

Every student, who has successfully completed the last stage of education, receives a certificate of general secondary education — a document confirming the knowledge in the state of standard volume. The certificate specifies the final grades for all studied subjects.

Higher Education



Higher education is provided by public and non-public (non-State) accredited higher education institutions. There are two levels of higher education:

Basic higher education (4 years) leading to the Bakalavr's degree, the first university level degree. This is equivalent to the B.Sc. degree in the US or Western Europe

Postgraduate higher education (5-6 years or more). After two years, students are entitled to receive a Magistr's degree. This is equivalent to a Master's Degree (M.Sc, M.A.) in the US or Western Europe. After a Master's degree, students can continue to study towards a doctoral degree: Kandidat Nauk degree (the first level, equivalent to Ph.D.) and Doktor Nauk degree (the second, highest level, equivalent to Professor).

The Bakalavr's (Bachelor's) degree programmes last for at least 4 years of full-time university-level study. The programmes are elaborated in accordance with the State Educational Standards which regulate almost 80% of their content. The other 20% are elaborated by the university itself. The programmes include professional and special courses in Science, the Humanities and Social-economic disciplines, professional training, completion of a research paper/project and passing State final exams. Having obtained the Bakalavr's degree, students may apply to enter the Magistr's programme or continue their studies in the framework of the Specialist's Diploma programmes. The Bakalavr's degree is

awarded in all fields except Medicine after defending a Diploma project prepared under the guidance of a supervisor and passing the final exams. In Medicine, the first stage lasts for six years.

Holders of the Bakalavr's (Bachelor) degree are admitted to enter the Specialist Diploma and Magistr's (Master's) degree programmes. Access to these programmes is competitive. The Magistr's (Master's) degree is awarded after successful completion of two years' full-time study. Students must carry out a year of research including practice and prepare and defend a thesis which constitutes an original contribution and sit for final examinations.

Access to the Kandidat Nauk (Aspirantura) level again is very competitive. Candidates must hold a Specialist Diploma or a Magistr's degree. Studies last for 3 years. The Aspirantura prepares for research and professorial activities. Students must learn teaching methods, ICTs, and pass qualifying (Kandidat Nauk) exams. They carry out independent research, prepare and defend a dissertation in public. They are then awarded the scientific degree of Kandidat Nauk. The Doctor Nauk programme is specific and its duration is not fixed. It follows the Kandidat Nauk and is awarded after preparation and public defence of a dissertation.

Conclusion

As we can see, the basic features of the British educational system are the same as in Russia: full-time education is compulsory up to the middle teenage years; the academic year begins almost at the same time - at the end of summer (in Britain), on the 1st of September (in Russia); compulsory education is free of charge, but parents may spend money on educating their child privately if they want to (only public means private for Britain!). There are three recognized stages, with children moving from the first stage (primary) to the second stage (secondary) at around the age of 10-12. However, there is quite a lot which distinguishes education in Britain from the way it works in Russia. There are children in Britain start learning at the age of 5 years old, while in Russia – at the age of 6-7; a wider choice of subjects and schools (state and public, grammar, comprehensive and etc); strong emphasis on practical rather than academic abilities; the system more flexible and individual; the importance of sports, schools as community, different grading system and the duration of the year.

Also, none of the educational systems are perfect, each one has its own advantages and disadvantages. They are:

- favouring an educational elite. British public schools and further education are only available to the few whose families (predominantly upper and middle class) can afford it.
- The shortage of teachers in Britain. They have rather a low-status job
- are old-fashioned in clinging to traditions (uniforms)
- In Russia, school curriculum is aimed at children with ordinary abilities (but there still exist many pupils whose abilities are above or below ordinary skills)
- + a wider range of subjects as well as providing a wider range of facilities. This allows all British children to reach their potential through a number of avenues other than just academic ones.
- + British national curriculum is more flexible. The curriculum does not tell teachers "how to teach", but concentrates on "the essential knowledge and skills every child should have" so that teachers "have the freedom to shape the curriculum to their pupils' needs".
- + The cost of studying at Russian educational institutions is cheaper than in Britain
- + In Russia, you may obtain the opportunity to receive free tuition. In addition, some categories of foreign citizens, including compatriots, may apply for state-funded places on equal terms with Russians.
- + Diplomas of British universities are recognised in all countries.
- + Diplomas of Russian universities are recognised in most countries now due to signing the Bologna Declaration.
- + High academic standards (in Russia)
- + Compulsory education is free of charge in both countries
- + Both countries are trying to comply with the demands of the present-day society

So, in other words, neither Russian nor British system of education is ideal. If we take the advantages of both systems we will get the ideal model of system of education.

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